

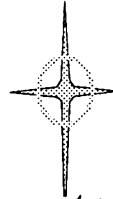
Canberra
Amiga
Users'
Society
Inc



beCAUS
December 1992

Aims of the Society

Canberra Amiga Users Society Incorporated (CAUS) is an independent group (currently with about 250 members) formed for the benefit of people who own, use or are interested in the Commodore Amiga computer.



Benefits

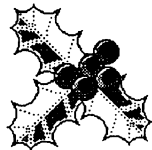
Benefits include a bi-monthly newsletter, monthly meetings, discounts, a bulletin board, Public Domain library, special interest groups (SIGs) and the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with other Amiga users.

Subscriptions

Membership of the Society is available for an annual fee of \$20. This fee may be paid, with a filled-in application form, either at any of the monthly meetings or by mail to the Membership Secretary, PO Box 596, Canberra 2601.

Meetings

Meetings are held at 8 pm on the second Thursday of each month in either the Chifley Room or the auditorium at the Canberra Workers' Club in Childers St, Civic. The dates for the next few meetings are 14 January and 11 February 1993.



CAUS CHRISTMAS PARTY

*Members and their families are welcome to the
CAUS Christmas Party
from midday on 19 December
at Weston Park near the Maze*

*bring your own meat, drinks and utensils
salad and bread supplied
some hand crafted lamb chops will
be available*

\$1 per head and not a monitor in sight



The Beginners' Group runs from 7-8 pm prior to each meeting. Details of upcoming meetings and main topics will be advertised in the Canberra Times "Fridge Door" the week of the meeting.

DRAFT CONSTITUTION

Members should note that the attached draft CAUS Constitution will be discussed at the January and February ordinary meetings.

Canberra Amiga Users' Society Inc

CAUS Committee (1992)

Director	Chris Townley	2545922 (h) 6-8pm
Vice Director	Gordon Owtftrim	2972692 (h) 6-8pm
Secretary	Tony Hayman	2961894 (h) 7-10pm
Membership Sec.	Berenice Jacobs	2552284 (h) 4-8pm
Treasurer	Terry Sullivan	2545922 (h)
Committee	Stephen Bourne	2350150 (h)
	Christopher Cole	2478590 (h)
	Joe McCully	2552128 (h)
	Nell Squires	2591128 (h)
	Loy Winkler	2588320 (h) 4-10pm

Special Interest Groups

Each of the following members is coordinating a Special Interest Group (SIG) in the listed topic. If you are interested in joining one of these groups and getting more out of your Amiga, contact them either direct or at the next monthly meeting:

Loy Winkler	2588320	Genealogy
Bernie Wiemers	2418739	Amos
Christopher Cole	2478590	Hardware
Matthew Taylor	2515343	Music and Graphics
David Wilson	2918324	Desktop Publishing
Rob Vander Meer	2418480	Video
Andrew Boundy	2916971	CanDo

CAUS Public Domain Collection

The Society's Fred Fish collection of public domain software contains a huge variety of goodies from text editors, databases, communication, graphic and music programs through to utilities, games, disks of pictures and animations and many demonstrations of commercial programs.

The following people are PD librarians:

Simon Tow	Fisher	2888362
Lawrence Coombs	Aranda	2515523
Berenice Jacobs	Scullin	2552284
Bernie Wiemers (AMOS)		2489837

You have the choice of buying the disks or swapping them for some new acceptable NAME brand disk that you own. The copying fee for each disk (except for the FISH catalogue disk) is \$1 to cover the librarian's costs. For those who want other than the Fish collection, Berenice Jacobs holds a large collection of alternate public domain. Contact Berenice for more details.

Would the member who asked about moving V1.2 files to V2.0 at the Beginners' Group please contact Joe McCully on 255 2128

beCAUS

Contributions

beCAUS is produced bi-monthly. Contributions can be submitted to the Editor via the newsletter area of the bulletin board, at the monthly meetings or to The Editor, PO Box 596, Canberra 2601.

Articles, reviews, comments and graphics are always welcome. The deadline for contributions to the newsletter is the 15th of the month preceding distribution. All contributions should be accompanied by the author's name and contact details. We reserve the right to refuse, disclaim and/or edit contributions.

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Advertising

	First Run	Rerun
Full page	\$40	\$30
Half page	\$30	\$20
Quarter page	\$20	\$10

First Run prices are applicable if the Editor has to format the advertisement.

Production

The Editor for the newsletter was David Wilson. The copy was formatted by the DTP SIG using Professional Page v3 and the masters were printed on a Postscript printer by Desktop Utilities. The offset printing was done by Tuggeranong Print.

A Review of AutoPilot V1.01

by Andy Blazer

This is Part One of a Two Part article on a CompuServe Information Service Communications Utility for the Amiga. In this issue I will deal with Setting up AutoPilot, Setting up Forums/Sections and Downloading a File.

I have recently joined the eye-opening world of computer telecommunications and the bewildering task of learning a whole new field of the Amiga lay in front of me. Looking back on the purchase of my Fax/Modem and the information I had to come to grips with still "Spins me out" sometimes.

Firstly, before I get to the guts of this review, I must explain what I expected from my Fax/Modem when I purchased it. As I have many original and registered programs, such as PageStream, Superbase Professional, Final Copy, Professional Page, ProWrite and Flow, I have needed technical support from the various companies from one time to another. Writing letters and waiting hopefully for a reply after maybe 2 months was really starting to bug me. That's where the Fax/Modem came onto the scene. Now I use a program called GPFax and my Maestro 9642 XR to just send a Fax, leave it on AutoAnswer during the night and usually receive a reply by the morning when I wake up.

I might point out at this stage though that this is not always as good as it sounds. Unfortunately many Amiga companies will not send technical support faxes internationally. These companies project an image of being very big and professional, but in my view, due to this lack of support, show an amateurish side to the Amiga in general. Disappointing isn't it?

Another good way of getting technical support, especially from the major U.S. Amiga companies is via the CompuServe Information Service (CIS), albeit very expensive if you don't control your access time. My first bill when I was logging on to CIS

manually was \$600 in one month. Shock horror!!!

Enter AutoPilot. Written especially for we Amiga/CompuServe users. AutoPilot (AP) will autodial the closest CompuServe node for you, log you on, get messages in selected areas or forums, retrieve your CompuServe Electronic Mail, send replies that you have previously entered off-line, download file catalogs of various selected forums or upload and download previously selected files. After AP has finished its "online run" it will log you off CIS so you can read and reply to the new messages it just picked up, or you can un-archive new files you have downloaded, all offline and free of CIS charges.

Setting up AP

AForums, the makers of AP, recommend at least 5 Megabytes of Hard Drive space, 1 Megabyte of memory and WorkBench 2.04 only. AP runs on an interlaced screen so us flicker fixer-less Amigans will have to put up with some shaky screens, but who cares, the overall nature and quality of this program will blow you away.

Setting up AP was a breeze. On the main screen pull down menu "AutoPilot", you select setup. Information such as your Modem initialization string, CompuServe Node telephone number, CIS ID number and password can be entered. You can also select the speed of the connection - although I believe CIS here in Australia allows a maximum connection of 2400 BPS. Paths can be set for your messages and files to be stored. There are also buttons for having a special "log file" to be written to everytime you log on to show your usage for each session. The only other buttons are those for Editing and Loading Macro's.

CompuServe forums are set on the main AP screen. AP when first downloaded comes with the following forums:

CMail - for CompuServe Pacific Electronic Mail.

AmigaVendor - for various Amiga software companies.

AmigaArts - for various Amiga specialized areas.

AmigaUser - for various Amiga general topics.

AmigaTech - for technical topics.

I have added one forum already - GamePub or Game Publishers. This was mainly due to the fact that I own Harpoon for the Amiga and was having some problems with it (and still am). The designers for this game, Three-Sixty Pacific are members of the Game Publishers forum on CIS, so I have been able to correspond with them via CIS quickly and with satisfaction.

Each forum on CIS can have many "sections." Think of a forum as a drawer on your Floppy or Hard Drive - within the drawer there can exist many other drawers or files; for example, within the AmigaVendor forum the following companies are represented in their own sections:

Central Coast Software - Quarterback ASDG

NewTek - Video Toaster

Impulse

New Horizons - ProWrite and Flow

Black Belt Systems

Syndesis

INOVAtronicS - Can Do

AutoPilot/Whap! - Online tech. support for AP.

Avant-garde SoftWood - Final Copy

OXXI/Precision - Superbase Pro

Right Answers

SoftLogik - PageStream, HotLinks.

MicroBotics

So as you can see, one forum can hold a virtual gold mine of contacts and information.

When you first get AP (off CIS) none of the forums has sections defined. Setting the forum sections is an easy process - Just double-click on the forum name displayed on the main screen and you will be presented with

cont. on p8

Complaints, complaints and the CDTV by Simon Tow

It was as a public domain librarian and someone who haIt was as a public domain librarian and someone who has always had a strong interest in the Fred Fish collection of public domain disks, that I first became really interested in the CDTV. The CDTV presentation given by a Commodore representative at one of the group's meeting had been interesting and the CDTV had shown a lot of potential, but with the price and the lack of good titles (programs), that was all it showed.

My major interest started when I heard about a Fred Fish CD that contained all of the disks up to disk 560. Having boxes and boxes of disks housing the same number of Fish disks I was naturally very interested in the concept of one CD that replace all those disks. The price of the CDTV was still high so I started to look at the alternatives. I should also say here that I thought it a pretty stupid sales ploy on Commodore's part not to take advantage of all those people who already had Amigas and push for a joint release of CHEAP CDROM players for the existing machines - the idea of spending \$1500 on what was essentially a CDROM drive and a cut down AMIGA when I already had a full blown AMIGA (A2000) with expansion slots just waiting to be filled did not appeal to me.

A digression ... the best time to buy machines from Commodore (is it just the Australian part??) is when they are trying to get rid of them. Let me put that more bluntly - dumping them. Commodore seems to be getting into the same suit as Atari has been in the past, with new machines that are presumably the best thing since sliced bread, but are outdated the next year with no upgrade path. Sound familiar? Over the past year and a half I have seen a new A500+ come on the market which was not sold in Australia because Commodore Australia decided that why should they introduce a new

machine when they can dump all the old models on the Australian public. They did just that and then announced that the A500 and A500+ would no longer be sold - dead end machine no upgrade path. The A2000 has been selling very cheaply of late and I suspect it is for the same reason. The shock was when the A3000 which was a pretty pricey machine for what you got also dropped dramatically in price - also a dead branch in the Amiga family tree. We hear about Commodore's new graphic chipset or rather what sounds like an interim chipset on the way to 'the chipset'. I decided a while back that it was not worth upgrading to the new machines until some stability occurs. I know that the IBM machines come out with upgrades regularly, and that previous machines can be locked out of some of the upgrade path, BUT you do not usually have a machine coming out with half a chipset in and the promise of the rest coming 'real soon', but don't count on it being able to be fitted in the machine you just purchased. I would have thought the logical thing to do if there were chipset changes still expected, would have been to have the chipset housed as a separate card in the machine so that it could be upgraded. Enough gripes.... Oh, the reason for the winge is the reason for my renewed interest in the CDTV.

The A600 had come out and the AA chipset in all new machines was the word. I guess there is a CDTV about to come out with the AA chipset in it because the price of the CDTVs took a dive to a very acceptable level at the last Commodore show. The dive was so good that it eclipsed the A570/A690?? CDROM drive for the A500 in price. Why buy a CDROM drive when you can have a CDROM drive and a stand alone Amiga for the same or lower price. Anyway, my brother and Jeff Wilson, our ex-director, both purchased the CDTVs for around \$620 and keyboards, track-

balls and the like. They then found out that the CDTVs could be connected to another Amiga using a public domain product called PARNET. This gives your Amiga a CDROM drive running at around one and a half times floppy disk drive speed. Not startling but a start. I was still not convinced, until both Jeff and my brother purchased the Fred Fish CD - now with 700!! disks contained on one CD. The disk comes with instructions on how to connect to an Amiga using PARNET. I was convinced, and put my money down with Rob Wilkins of Carina Software who is regularly at the CAUS meetings. After all that, now for the review...

The CDTV - on initial unwrapping: looks good in basic black; all power requirements handled in the case (for A500 users - no power brick); basic front panel - looks like a CD player nothing more, except for lots of Amiga looking plugs and sockets at the back, a strange expansion socket hidden behind a panel at the bottom part of the front panel, and the CD/TV and Reset buttons also on the front panel; a remote control with lots of buttons; a disk caddy (yuck); intro CD; SIMCITY and World VISTA CD titles thrown in; NO USEFUL PAPER INSTRUCTIONS.

Well, may as well plug it in and connect up it up to the television - just like hooking up a video recorder. #@\$%\$#%\$@, not enough channels on the old TV to tune it in. Have to put it through the video, Hmmm, have to put it before the video so that the video can pick it up as a separate station, so aerial to CDTV, CDTV out to video in, video out to TV. Tune it in... YES the CDTV picture. Have a look at meagre instructions - the instructions are on the intro CD provided...not bad, but no technical info. May as well look at the intro...good demo with easy to understand instructions on how to use the remote control etc. Glad there were titles included with the purchase. Will try them out.....(comments on titles later). At this point I would have gone still crazy without other titles to look at. Thanks to Rob Wilkins I had some extra titles

to peruse - thanks again Rob.

The machine was up and running and the next comment area has to be on the remote control. I don't know if my remote control is characteristic. I hope not because mine is not reliable. I don't know whether the power of the unit is not sufficient or the coding that is being sent is the problem, or simply the contacts for the buttons are unreliable. I can only say that the unit programs the CD player alright, but is frustrating when going through selections, and VERY frustrating when trying to play games - particularly ones that require precision movement and firing using the selection buttons. Even with new batteries and the remote right in front of the CDTV infrared receiver, the remote control doesn't...reliably. Generally not a unit to do extended work with. How to connect the mouse and joysticks - I don't remember seeing those ports at the back. That is because there are none. I found out very shortly afterwards that in order to connect normal joysticks and mice, a trackball unit has to be purchased (at around \$185) - great move Commodore. I checked the mini din socket for the trackball - only 4 pins. How can you convert the 18 pins in the two joystick/mouse ports into 4 pins - I suspect that the trackball unit and the remote control are like keyboards to the CDTV in that they sent codes down a couple of wires for each up/down of a button/movement instead of changing the voltage on several wires.

The other essential piece of equipment I needed was a diskdrive to see whether the CDTC would work as an Amiga. There were no problems connecting up the diskdrive to the standard disk drive port at the back. A normal Amiga boot disk was put in the disk drive and the reset button pressed. The CDTV proceeded to boot up without any problems. The interesting thing once you have booted up the Amiga side of the CDTV is that you can look at the files on the CD titles provided you have a directory utility that doesn't need a keyboard, or a keyboard. The interesting thing about most of the titles that I looked at was

that they were basic single floppy drive titles converted to the CD and therefore only used up around 800 thousand bytes out of 650 million bytes. What a waste.

Another minor gripe is the disk caddy which is the norm in CDROM drives. It is a potential CD scratcher if your not careful. This is due to the way that the CDs have to be placed under a ledge in the caddy before the CD can be placed in the caddy base. The situation is equally perilous when removing the CD is no access to the CD edges in the caddy. The caddy must be turned over and the CD caught as it falls out. The only option to avoid this is to buy more caddies, but at \$15-\$25 dollars each it is a sour option.

What can you connect to it, I hear you say. The CDTV uses the standard Amiga connectors for the Serial, Parallel, Disk Drive, stereo sound and RGB-video ports - so you can connect up you a modem, a printer(or PARNET cable), disk drive/s, your stereo and an RGB monitor. The non standard Amiga ports are the MIDI IN/OUT, keyboard (6 pin mini DIN), trackball (4 pin mini DIN), RF modulator card with composite video output (this card can be replaced with a genlock), an expansion card slot which rumors suggest may eventually be occupied with a SCSI card or a Ethernet Lan card, and finally the memory card slot at the front of the machine. This slot is meant to fill the save/restore game function that is normally allocated to floppy disks. Unfortunately, the RAM cards are expensive, so it is probably cheaper to buy a floppy disk drive. Other rumors suggest that expansions may be available through this port also, but that the port was based on very early standard specifications of the slot and may therefore no longer be standard. Internal fittings are apparently limited due to amount of space between the top of the Amiga board and the case. I read in one English magazine that there is a 2 Meg chip ram board available, that 68000 accelerators just fit and work and there is no room for internal hard disks. I'll have to wait for the warranty to run out before I lift the top and find ut for

myself.

The titles provided with the CDTV were SIMCITY and World Vista Atlas. The Atlas has come upon hard times of late with the changing boundaries in Europe, and is no longer up to date. It is interesting all the same to zoom down to city maps of what I guessed were classed the more important cities in each country. It would probably erk some Victorians to note that Sydney zoomed down to a street map, but Melbourne didn't. I was not impressed with the lack of a map of the Capital of Australia - it only rated a high level dot. The cultural part of the Atlas was also interesting with a number of spoken words and a song for each country. Rating - interesting, out of date already and not something that would be referenced very often. SIMCITY is the classic game converted to CD. The only additions that I could find were the change in the interface to work with the remote control and the load/save to memory card. The game is fun and provides the Amiga with something to do when you have other things to do. Rating - good but not because its on CD.

After all the gripes you will probably think I don't like the CDTV. Not true, its a neat machine that I basically bought for its CDROM capability. I recieved more than I expected and now have a keyboard and diskdrive for it and a puzzles title that the kids love to play (I'll report on that one at a later date). I have ordered the original reason for buying it - the Fred Fish CD, and I am currently putting the PARNET cable together in anticipation of the CD arrival.

Would I recommend it? Definitely for those people who either only want a basic Amiga to play games, or those who want access to CDTV titles (and ISO standard CDROM data - you can read data off IBM titles but you can't play them due to the different system). The PARNET is not very fast but if the Ethernet LAN card eventuates, access speed from your other Amiga should only be limited by the speed of the CDROM drive.

Disabled Knitter Cooks Books by Leigh Murray

This article describes a variety of products which are good examples of less-than-mainstream but very practical possibilities for making excellent use of the Amiga. Many of the products described in the DISABLED section would have all sorts of other uses for the non-handicapped.

I have compiled a couple of companion disks which can be obtained from Megadisc: Disabled_Aids has the disabled programs described below (DeafLab, Lens, PrinText, OneKey etc); and Cook&Stitch has the cooking and stitchery programs, plus a sample HyperBook recipe database I made. Each of these disks contains the relevant sections of this article, with details of how to get all the products. So if you or anyone you know has interests in one of these areas, get the disk; each disk costs only a few dollars. Contact Megadisc on (02) 959 3692 or, for orders, toll-free on 008 227 418.

DISABLED DeafLab

This program translates English letters into the hand signs used by the hearing impaired, allowing a person who doesn't sign to communicate with a deaf person who does.

But it is set up for American sign language, which is, I am told, different to the system used in Australia.

Input Devices

Suitable input devices include the Marconi RB2 Trackball (easier to manipulate than a mouse for those with poor muscle control), and the Concept Keyboard (a touch-sensitive keyboard which has a programmable overlay so that it can be tailored, for example, to correspond to the DPaint screen options).

Touch Screens

The TouchWindow is a plastic membrane which fits over the monitor

screen, giving a touch-sensitive screen that emulates the action of the mouse; instead of using a mouse, you just touch the screen. It can also be used away from the screen, on a desk or your knee.

Magnifying Glasses

I had a quick look at three magnifying programs: Lens, Q-Lens and Big, and found Q-Lens the most useful. It can be swapped to a screen other than Workbench, so it could be used for reading text at 2x or 4x magnification; it is easy to use. Lens magnifies whatever is under the mouse pointer, so when you move the pointer to scan across the page, the display jiggles a bit; sliding the mouse along something like a ruler or book edge helps to make the display steadier. These programs could have other uses, for quick magnification of sections of windows.

Speak to Me

And yet another approach would be to use the Speak function of the Amiga to read the text out loud to you. Speak could be used from within a word processor such as ProWrite or a text displayer such as PrinText; these each have a menu function Speak. If this function is selected, the text is read out in a very robotic voice and with decidedly iffy pronunciation (icon comes out ickon!). When not drowned out by my chortles, it was just 'legible'. The Speak function certainly could be useful if you can't read (and could be fun for kids, too). As well as being useable from within ProWrite or PrinText, the Speak function can be initiated from the CLI.

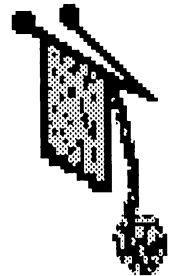
OneKey for OneFinger Typists

OneKey is designed for people who can only press one key at a time. Instead of having to hold down the Shift key, Alt key, and Ctrl key all at once (as you might need to in some programs), or the Shift key and a letter (to get a capital), you can press the keys one after another.

KNITTER

Knitting Software and Hardware

Knit Editor translates pixels in any lo-res IFF picture file (of up to 32 colours) to stitches. Other products from the same stable include a tutorial book, Designing Knits on Your Home Computer, and the Bit Knitter (\$US499) which consists of software and an interface that will let you hook your Amiga directly to an electronic knitting machine and drive it directly from your on-screen design.



Stitchery

Another interesting product is Stitchery, which translates IFF pictures into needlework charts, for cross stitch/needlepoint. One pixel of the picture becomes a stitch on the graph.

Embroidery Cottons Database

In the Megadisc29 Classifieds, there are details of a database set up by Beau Rice to catalogue DMC threads. The disk is available from Beau (who lives in Canberra) for \$2.50.

COOKS

BonAppetit and Recipe-Fax

BonAppetit is a recipe program for creating and manipulating recipes. You can search for recipes by title, keyword, or ingredient. Recipe-Fax is a similar product but appears to be more upmarket than BonAppetit, and I think it would be easier to use.

Drink Me

With a somewhat tenuous link to cooking, Beau Rice's Home Brewer's Disk (Megadisc's MISC 137) is "a lengthy, and very practical, manual with all you ever need to know about making hooch at home. The disk includes all kinds of beer, all kinds of wine, fortified wine, brandies, and much more, along with other less inebriating concoctions such as ginger beer."

HyperBook: The Book for Hyper-Cooks?

When I got up to writing about the recipe stuff, I had a good think about what I would want a recipe database to do, and what would be the benefits of a database over a book. I'm rusty on recipes now (I've done virtually no



cooking for years), but I used to dabble mildly in cooking, and I liked to hoard interesting recipes gleaned from all over the place (magazines, books, leaflets, word of mouth).

The greatest advantage of a recipe database for me would be the ability to keep my motley collection of recipes all together in one convenient place. Other handy features would include easy editing of recipes (to record twiddles of ingredients and method), the ability to search on ingredients - basically a very good index - and the capability to print out the recipes to eliminate such risks as flour all over the Amiga keyboard.

I've been playing with HyperBook a lot lately. It is a terrific program - easy to use and great fun, and it is one of the least-threatening programs for a new user that I've ever had the pleasure to learn. And I thought it might be suitable for some form or other of a recipe database, although I wasn't clear how. So I had a quick go at making a prototype; I've put a sample of it on Cook&Stitch.

CookBook Construction: Take One Typist; Add Modem, OCR or A64

Whatever form of recipe database is chosen, entering the text still has to be done. Typing in the recipes is the simplest, most tedious way; or you could download some from networks via modem. A Migraph OCR scanner might be another way. And if you've got any old recipes (or other needed text files) stored on Commodore C64,

C128 or Plus/4 disks, then the A64 emulator device can be used to transfer the files across to the Amiga.

BOOKS

Paper Books

There are many reference books for the Amiga. Check out technical bookstores (eg Daltons).

I struggled with the ABACUS Amiga-DOS book (I think it is poorly set out). The Commodore manual that comes as part of the Workbench 2 upgrade kit is miles better, with clear explanations and good layout, although the Index could be improved. The Bantam book by Commodore too, is similarly good.

For those wanting to learn programming, a Megadisc reader recommended "Basic for Beginners" by Clive Trimore, simple and inexpensive (not specifically for the Amiga but a good intro to Basic). The book that comes with EasyAMOS is also supposed to be very good. AReXX is covered well in the Workbench 2 manual.

Disk Books

Coromandel Voyage

This is a cute book on a disk, tracing the voyage of the ship Coromandel from England to Australia in 1802. Basically a series of maps and daily entries of the ship's log, it is nicely-done and easy to use; just click on a date to display the log for that day. Coromandel Voyage comes on Megadisc's GR69A or B, and is well worth its teensy price (a few dollars).

Total Concept HyperBook Books

I haven't seen these books yet, but they've received good reviews, and look like fun educational tools. They sell in the UK as relatively inexpensive licenceware. So far there are three books in the series: Dinosaurs, Geology and Astronomy. Each is set up as a hyperbook of text and digitised pictures.

World Atlas

This disk book has been considerably expanded in recent versions (now up to release 2.5), and may be a good educational tool (although probably with a strong American bias).

Bible Products

There seems to be a veritable collection of Bible stuff for the Amiga. The fanciest is Amiga Bible Search 1.1, which manages to fit all 66 books of the New International Version of the Bible (Old and New Testaments) on to two disks, with a Concordance on a third disk and a Bible reader on a fourth; it features very speedy searching. T-N-T is a 2-disk set of the King James version of the New Testament, with search and print routines. Megadisc has several offerings: a 3 disk set of the complete Bible and a single disk of the New Testament.

Sprechen Sie Francais? Parlez-vous Deutsch?

If you do speak French or German, you will definitely comprehend that I could do with a spot of language tuition. Audio Gallery have one answer: a series of foreign language talking picture dictionaries on disk, featuring digitised speech by native speakers. Everyday scenes are shown in pictures, with various items numbered. Select an item and the word is spoken and also displayed. There is a dictionary, pronunciation guide, manual and quizzes - but no grammar.

Online Books

For a very pricey fee, AAP offers its news services to personal subscribers via modem; contact ACI Computer Services. CTC DATABASE is a commercial service for online access to all the Macquarie Library and the Australian and Grolier Encyclopaedias; fairly inexpensive, it might provide an excuse for getting a modem.

CDTV Books

There are some terrific-looking books on Amiga CD: encyclopaedias, history books, illustrated dictionaries, gardening books, a health manual, and atlases. And even a recipe book!

EPILOGUE

Whether or not you are a disabled knitter who cooks books, I'd be surprised if you couldn't find something at least slightly interesting amongst this wonderful smorgasbord of Amiga products.

Autopilot Review cont. from p3

a blank section screen. On this screen a button must be selected (ticked) so that AP will get all the sections for that particular forum when AP next calls CIS. As easy as 1-2-3.

Next to each forum on the main AP screen are two buttons called "Messages" and "Files". If you want to download the catalog of any particular forums' sections you click on the "Files" button. You will then be presented with a box containing 5 buttons:

Upload - For sending files to CIS
Download - For receiving files
Catalog - For retrieving file lists of various sections from CIS
Single_File - For getting one file
Exit - Self-explanatory.

The AP user would then select catalog. From here you can select the age of the files you would like to catalog from 1-999 days and a Keyword to search by if you wish. This in itself is an extremely handy and money saving feature of AP as you can sit back with a coffee (and a cigarette) and browse offline all the files just sitting there waiting to be plucked later on.

When you do want to download a file the user has only to click on the Download button and he/she is presented with the section catalog. Selecting a file for download is as simple as browsing through the catalog and marking a file for download by clicking on the "Download" button. It is just so easy.

For Sale

Vizawrite Desktop (wordprocessor) \$50
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Galaxy Force (shoot em up) \$10
Populous \$15
NEC P1/P2/P3 colour printer ribbon \$20
phone **Fred** on 288 6708 after 6.30 pm
ps Amiga 1000 & amber monitor any offers?

Tutorials

The Committee is thinking of organising small classes on particular Amiga topics for members. The classes would last for about 3 - 4 hours with a maximum of 10 participants eg on Saturday or Sunday afternoons. Cost would be about \$20 per head. What would you like as topics? - genlocks, WB2.0, modems, word processors, BBS? Why not discuss it with one of the Committee members.

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Getting into Hypermedia

by Stephen Bourne

Background - hypertext / hypermedia / multimedia.

My previous article dealt with clarifying the nature of hypermedia. Essentially it is the combining in a computer source of reference of various information elements - e.g. text, pictures, animated pictures, speech, music and other sounds.

Hypertext/hypermedia/multimedia creations are, in many areas, replacing or supplementing books and manuals. The computer's ability to randomly access a variety of media, its auto-searching tools, its ease of updating data, and affordability, seem sure to lead to an explosion of hypermedia applications in the 90's.

CD-Rom has been around for some time, but is now taking off in a big way because it is a mass storage device well suited to the demands of multimedia, and modern PC's (including all Amigas) now have the ability to deliver multimedia output. CD therefore seems destined to be the vehicle of the multimedia revolution, but is not in the least essential for any Amiga owner wishing to experiment with the new way of thinking and presenting information which is inherent in hypermedia.

As I said in the previous article, you can produce your own hypermedia program on the Amiga on a floppy or a hard disk. If you get ambitious you could, of course, have a CD pressed for \$2,000 plus, or buy your own CD pressing gear for \$20,000 plus.

Of what relevance is Hypermedia to you, the Amiga or anything else? Well it is coming, like it or not. In the business world, wordprocessing has replaced handwriting, typewriters and even many publishing requirements. Spreadsheets have replaced ledgers. Databases have replaced card systems.

Now, for reasons of cost (e.g. no printing charges), effectiveness (e.g. random access, searching ability, inclu-

sion of sound and moving pictures) and administrative flexibility (modular design, ability to constantly update), computer hypermedia programs are spilling into the world of business management, instruction, presentation and public relations. Educators are similarly taking to the new methodology.

Even privately we can now buy cheaply for our PC's the equivalent of set of encyclopedias on a single CD-Rom. This new encyclopedic format can be searched by the computer for all occurrences of something that interests the user, then provide near instant access, at random, to selected data (including sounds / speeches). It is a further bonus that the little silver disk requires virtually no storage space and can be updated regularly for a modest fee!

Comodore, in the Amiga, had for years the only genuine multimedia PC. That advantage may now seem to have dissipated, and at the time when it really counts, but the spin off is that the Amiga is a very well proven, stable and flexible machine in this area, and has some excellent (and cheap) software for multimedia "authoring". What can be done at present on the Amiga by ordinary enthusiasts can match expensive efforts by professionals on less sophisticated machines.

What could a mere mortal possibly tackle?

Examples accompanying hypermedia authoring programs demonstrate a range of applications from electronic storybooks to tailor-made business systems. Indeed you can really tie together just about any set of information via programs like AmigaVision, CanDo and Hyperbook. Areas in which I see obvious benefits are:

- . Encyclopedic information
- . Instruction manual substitutes
- . Access systems for diverse information relating to organisations
- . Education / tutorial systems
- . Affordable electronic publishing of personal interest material (hobby, academic or whatever).

At the personal level you could "publish" - via bulletin boards or any other means - just about anything you considered worthwhile e.g.:

- . a guide to early Australian stamps with images, explanatory text, historical background, list of dealers in various cities etc.
- . a guide to Canberra bird species with images, text, sounds, distribution maps, migratory paths, animations or colour cycled pictures for the latter ???
- . as above but for whales (not in Canberra of course) - now there is something that is topical, has not been done, and would be doted upon by Greenies; very, very, socially and ecologically correct;
- . in complete contrast - a guide to Canberra drinking holes;
- . military uniforms / history;
- . a synopsis of the finer points of the Merino, Dachshund, or Siamese cat, together with piccies from your stud and an order form;
- . how to build an igloo.

Well, you have the idea - virtually anything. A benefit from undertaking any such project is that you will most likely gain a much greater appreciation of the nature of the subject you are dealing with. You are inevitably forced to dissect, discriminate, group, explain etc. in the process compiling your information. You will almost certainly gain in computer knowledge. If you succeed to the extent that you are game to pass your work on to colleagues, or the world, you may well benefit other people with your knowledge and perhaps your methodology. Unlike publishing a book, it may cost you nothing other than time. If you have a subject, the inclination and the time, there really is a brave new information world out there waiting for your input! It may or may not be a significant problem that your program can only be viewed on an Amiga, but then there are plenty of discerning people with Amigas.

You could, of course, work on something relevant to CAUS. I think that an introductory disk for our club, its meetings, SIGS, examples of graphics / sound from SIGS etc., people to con-

tact, and so on, would be a very useful item for new members in particular. I also think that our own program on using modems and our bulletin board would be a stimulus and a great help to people wondering how to take the plunge into telecommunications. Is anyone interested in contributing to such projects? I would find time to help.

Using What?

I have mentioned already, I think, Hyperbook, CanDo and AmigaVision. In that order of ease-of-use these are the programs that in my view are best suited on the Amiga for creating your own hypermedia application.

You may see programs like ... no I won't cite any for fear of being sued ... claiming the same capacity, but in general they are "presentation" programs. They may be excellent for business presentations via the computer (or dumped to videotape) but they do not have the orientation or facilities of the three I have mentioned. Business presentation programs are big in the DOS and Mac worlds.

No program that I have seen, on any machine, is as simple and effective as Hyperbook in serving modest aims in the hypermedia world. Achieving similar things with other programs will almost inevitably take longer and may not even be as effective (I am not saying anything that hasn't been said in commercial reviews of the program). You need no knowledge of any form of programming to create applications with Hyperbook. It is a genuine point and click set-up for creating objects (e.g. buttons which might show a picture or text if clicked upon, or lead to another screen) and for setting the actions of objects.

How do these programs work?

Hyperbook and CanDo (but not AmigaVision) adopt the methodology established by "HyperCard" on the Mac. The program created is given the equivalence of a stack of cards ("Hyperbook" implies the "pages" of a book, but it is really the same thing).

Each "card" (individual screen) in the "stack" (the whole program) normally

groups items or functions relating to one area of the information being dealt with. For instance, a stack for a "Guide to Celebrated Canberra Drinking Holes" might have four cards at the base level, dealing with: CANBERRA NORTH / SOUTH / EAST / WEST. On each of these cards could be listed the names of all of the celebrated drinking holes in each region. Clicking on a particular pub's name could lead to a separate, sub-card dealing specifically with the data about it. This sub-card could have a picture of the pub pasted into the window as a background. It could have a series of buttons on it with titles like "CULTURAL RELEVANCE", "HISTORY", "SIGNIFICANT PERSONS WHO IMBIBED HERE", "SIGNIFICANT ANNUAL SOCIO/ECONOMIC EVENTS", and "CELEBRATED BAR PERSONS". Each of these buttons, if clicked, MIGHT display a related text file or picture (or perhaps play an appropriate sound).

Tools / mechanisms

The hyper card programs make it easy for you to set links for the user to navigate between cards by clicking on buttons in the shape of arrows, or labeled "NEXT" etc., or perhaps on invisible buttons placed over particular areas of a district map. Typically these navigation tools are: Next, Previous, Return (to a card used immediately beforehand), First, Last, and any specifically named card. Naturally the links don't have to be sequential - it hardly matters where a card is in the stack; what matters is that the correct links be set to it.

The programs should make it easy to create objects like lists, buttons, notes, and drawings. They should also allow you to import pictures or brushes to serve as pictorial backdrops to cards. Finally the programs must allow you to set functional actions for the objects that you create on the various cards. Such functions may include "reading" a text file, showing a picture, playing an animation or a sound, "speaking" a message, executing an AmigaDos or ARexx, or launching another program or a sub-deck (the latter is not possible on Hyperbook).

This is what "authoring" via a "card" type program amounts to: creating navigable screens which contain objects which in turn perform tasks for the user. They allow you to create and distribute stand-alone information programs of a sophistication matched only by teams of programmers a few years ago. What is even better, some mere mortals are actually doing it.

PLANNING HINTS:

Who is the user?

There is a number of things to consider here if you intend the program to be useful to others. It would be wise to target the abilities of about the lowest common denominator of user. You could assume users would be Amiga literate and therefore know how to scroll and close windows etc. However if you were designing a PR information system for the foyer of a building you probably should build in "Help" to explain even basic things like using the mouse, and which button to click in what circumstances.

A public access system presents quite a few problems, but they are not insoluble. I will deal with some in a later article, perhaps.

Even if you are designing something for distribution to people who should know how Amiga facilities work, make sure that on some basic screen, accessible very early in your application, that you give an overview of the program and details of anything out of the ordinary that the user may encounter (e.g. that you have to press CTRL / C to clear a picture). Empathise with the expected user. Get someone who knows nothing about the program to try it out - without you hovering over their shoulder to iron out the bumps.

Fundamentals of design.

It may seem a boring approach, but try to get uniformity into your program so that people will pick up quickly how to use it. It is a good idea to use a set of basic control buttons that is the same on every "card", for instance, to go forward or back, or to call a "Help" or a "Menu" screen from anywhere.

A good design principle is to have a few "root" level cards which provide branches to everything else. Perhaps have buttons on every card which can call any of these root level cards. This breaks away from the sequential mentality of presenting information. The data itself becomes broken into nodes in which like entities of information are grouped. [Of course if you are creating a children's story this may be irrelevant, depending upon how you design it.]

Create your graphics in something like DPaint, then import them, rather than use the modest graphics tools provided in multimedia program. Make sure that the resolutions and numbers of colours chosen will work in the multimedia program.

You can design an attractive screen with between four and eight colours. Going for elaborate designs can cost you a great deal in memory consumption and speed of execution in your application. Have a look at requesters etc. in various programs to see what colours they use and how they achieve 3D effects. The PD program "Pic-Saver" can grab and save any screen for you for analysis and loading into a program like DPaint. When you have done this you can read the RGB values via the palette adjuster.

I could go on but I had better get to the most important design factor. In almost any project you design, keep the text files and pictures you call separate from your application itself - to whatever extent you can. Have your program act as a template which can call in information. Why? Because everything you build into the program normally has to be put in memory when you boot it up. You can end up with 8 "cards" which consume a megabyte of memory, meaning that you can't save to disk perhaps, that most potential users can't even load it on their machines, or that it is slow and prone to crashing due to memory problems.

Alternatively, by using judiciously called external files you might have 50 "cards" occupying only 300k of RAM. Of course the "external" data must still accompany the program, but if need

be it can be compressed or put on a separate disk.

Perhaps the biggest advantage of the external data approach, though, is that such pictures, text, sounds etc. can be updated, improved or even replaced with a file of the same name, using separate specialist programs like DPaint or Prowrite, without you having to modify your application in any way. In fact you don't even have to load it to make such improvements. All the application knows, when it is used, is that it is calling a file of a certain name at a certain location (disk).

While we are on that subject, it is a good idea to create directories with names like PICS, ANIMS, DOCS etc. for your different categories of external files. Then create a batch file that can "assign" brief logical names to each directory [e.g. assign PDocs: My-Disk:ProjectDocs]. Use these "assignments" as the logical path names in your program if possible. Not only are

they briefer, they give greater integrity and flexibility to your data. Otherwise if you were to rename a disk or directory, or move files or directories, all calls from the program to such locations will fail. With an assignment system you simply modify the assignments in the batch file to reflect the new arrangement. This method also allows other users to do things like load your program onto their hard disk, re-set the assignments appropriately, then have everything run much quicker. If you don't understand DOS at all the above advice will be about as useful as a packet of mouse droppings, but don't worry, it is just a suggestion.

This is more than enough for this edition of the magazine. Providing there is interest in the topic, I will go on later to investigate strategies for different types of project, and of course, as promised, give some tips on using Hyperbook, including tricks not mentioned in its manual.



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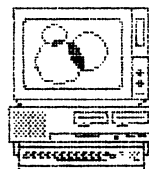
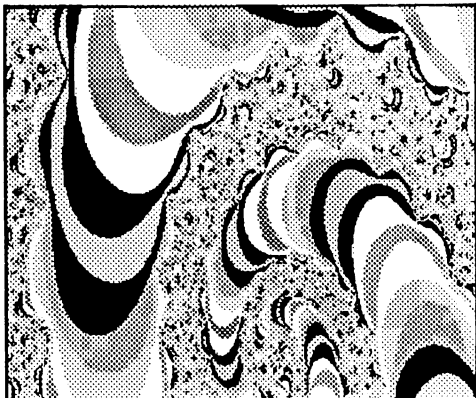
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Help Service

The following is a list of members who have volunteered to share their knowledge and experience with other members. If you have a problem or just need a bit of advice in any of the areas listed, please ring during the hours shown.

what's happening	Paul Martin	10-10 M-Su	2532121
general help	Joe McCully	6-12 pm M-Su	2552128
	Gordon Owttrim	7-10 pm M-Su	2972692
	Neil Squires	7-10 pm M-F 10-9 Sa-Su	2591128
hard disks, Digiview	Simon Tow	6-7 pm M-F	2888362
laser printing, desktop publishing	Frank Kelghley	6-7 pm M-F	2396658
desktop video	Robert Vander Meer	6-8 pm M-F	2417113
beginners AmigaDOS	Collin Vance	6-8 pm M-Su	2511087
Superbase Wordperfect	Andrew Boundy	8-10pm M-Th	2916971
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